

Training and Education

EDUCATION DIVISION

The Education Division of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) provides a comprehensive program of education and training for judges through the Center for Judicial Education and Research (CJER), an internationally recognized judicial education program.

The Education Division also offers administrative education programs for appellate and trial court administrators and staff through the Judicial Administration Institute of California. The division serves as a resource to provide, or assist in providing, training to staff at all levels in the judicial branch, including court clerks and other court personnel.

In addition, the AOC offers a variety of specialized training and education services, such as conferences organized by the Statewide Office of Family Court Services.

Center for Judicial Education and Research

Following are descriptions of CJER's educational programs for new and experienced judicial officers. Rule 970 of the California Rules of Court governs mandatory judicial education for new trial and appellate court judges.

Mentor Program

The mentor program provides for an experienced judicial officer to assist each new trial court judicial officer in making the transition from law practice to the bench.

Orientation Program for New Trial Court Judicial Officers

This one-week, in-residence program provides new trial judges, commissioners, and referees with basic training in judicial roles, ethics, tasks, and skills at the time of or shortly after taking the bench.

B. E. Witkin Judicial College Program of California

The nationally recognized B. E. Witkin Judicial College of California is an annual two-week, in-residence program providing comprehensive education for all new trial court judges, commissioners, and referees appointed during the year.

Judicial Visitation Program

This program provides tours of state correctional institutions to acquaint judges with the various institutions to which they may commit criminal defendants and juveniles, and to assist them in making appropriate sentencing choices.

Continuing Education Institutes for Judges

To assist the California judiciary in keeping up to date with recent developments in the law and in solving current court problems, CJER conducts eight annual continuing education institutes designed for appellate, civil, criminal, family, juvenile court, probate and mental health, and rural court judges as well as retired judges who sit on assignment, and one institute for judicial research attorneys.

Continuing Judicial Studies Programs

These one-week, in-residence programs are designed to meet the advanced educational needs of experienced judges, particularly those changing their court assignments. Continuing Judicial Studies is the first graduate-level program of its kind in the United States and features modern adult educational techniques and learning aids.

Computer Courses for Judicial Officers

CJER offers computer courses for judges at both the beginning and experienced levels. One class is designed to address the specific needs of appellate judges.

Publications

CJER prepares benchbooks, procedural guides, and other working tools for California judges. All of CJER's publications are available to judicial officers at no cost. Many of CJER's publications are available in electronic format, in CD-ROM, and on the Internet.

Videotapes and Audiotapes

CJER has available more than 600 current educational videotapes that judicial officers may borrow. Audiotapes of most of the video programs are also available.

Administrative Education Programs

The Education Division's administrative education programs include a drug court symposium, a drug case management training program, executive team leadership workshops, the Court Clerks Training Institute, a seminar on ethics for the court employees of California, trial court staff training seminars, an appellate management institute, an appellate employment symposium, and a continuing studies program for appellate staff.

Other ongoing administrative education programs include:

Judicial Administration Institute of California

The core program in management education for judges and court administrators is called the Executive Development Series. It includes "Managing Technology," "Leading Organizational Change," "Leadership," "Building Effective Management Teams," "Court Budgeting," and "Court and Community Collaboration."

California Judicial Administration Conference

This annual event, attended by presiding judges, court administrators, and court clerks, features presentations and discussions of current issues as well as demonstrations of innovative and successful projects in California courts. The conference affords an opportunity for the Judicial Council and its standing advisory committees to gather annually and discuss critical issues.

Mid-Level Management Conference

This conference includes regional workshops designed to introduce managers to the latest skills, management techniques, and court information.

FAMILY COURT SERVICES PROGRAMS

Statewide Education Institute

Offered to court mediators, evaluators, court investigators, and other family court personnel, this annual 2½-day statewide conference draws about 400 participants and is held in conjunction with the CJER Family Law Institute. The institute includes workshops, work sessions, and plenary sessions.

Regional Conferences

Five two-day regional conferences, ranging in attendance from 20 to 150 people per region, are offered to all mediators, evaluators, investigators, and other court personnel on topics selected by the regions.

New Mediator Training

An intensive 3½-day training for new family court mediators, evaluators, and other court-connected professionals provides an opportunity to gain basic skills and background in court-based child custody mediation, evaluation, and the laws guiding their work.

New Court Professional Training

An intensive 28-hour training program for new professionals in the area of family and children court services provides an opportunity to gain basic understanding and skills in the areas of child custody and dependency mediation, investigation, and evaluation.

Statewide Meetings for Family and Children Court Program Administrators, Managers

Semi-annual meetings provide relevant management training and comprehensive and targeted information regarding innovative programs and best practices, proposed and recently adopted legislation, budgeting and accountability issues, implementation of mandated programs and services, and research findings and statistics.

A management-oriented program for trial judges, designed to improve their understanding of how a court and its judges can better manage the trial process.

Presiding Judges Meeting

An opportunity for trial court leaders to share information on modern court management practices, innovative programs, and statewide projects that can assist them in better managing their courts and caseloads.

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SPECIAL TRAININGS

Juvenile Court Improvement

For the first time in California history, three coordinated statewide juvenile court improvement projects are under way in the areas of needs assessment, child advocacy training, and judicial review and technical assistance.

Improving Judicial Effectiveness Program